DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 120 284 UD 015 784

AUTHOR Davidson, Leonard; Krackhardt, David
TITLE Structural Change and the Disadvantaged. An Empirical Test of Culture of Poverty/Situational Theories of Hard-Core Work Behavior.
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 32p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American sociological Association (San Francisco, California, August 1975); Occasional light print

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Factors; *Economically Disadvantaged; *Economic Factors; Educational Attitudes; Employment Opportunities; Employment Programs; *Industrial Education; Inner City; Instructional Staff; Labeling (of Persons); Staff Role; Trainees; Unemployed; Urban Culture; *Work Attitudes

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to test the culture of poverty explanation of the work behavior of the "hard core unemployed" against situational explanations by examining the reactions of trainees to two naturally occurring structural changes in a minority employment program. Firstly, program structure improvements over a five-year period were found to be associated with radical improvements in male trainee performance; trainee poPulation characteristics did not change during the period. Secondly, during one year of participant observation analysis, systematic changes in placement opportunity and staff supportiveness were also associated with significant changes in trainee behavior. It is concluded that trainee reactions to extreme changes in the program structure were closely tied to situational realities. These findings provide evidence that, in regard to the world of work, the impact of the minority individual's personality has been over stated and misunderstood in the culture of poverty literature. Rather than viewing attitudinal and motivational states as permanent parts of the individual's personality, their adaptive nature should be emphasized. If the motivational patterns of employees are to be understood, a closer look must be taken at the employee's work environment. both the social and techno-economic environment had to be viewed as worthwhile or the trainees in this study would significantly limit their effort. (Author/JM)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED120284

STRUCTURAL CHANGE AND THE DISADVANTAGED: AN EMPIRICAL TEST OF CULTURE OF POVERTY/SITUATIONAL THEORIES OF HARD-CORE WORK BEHAVIOR*

Leonard Davidson
University of Florida

David Krackhardt
M.I.T.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

UD015784

*The research on which this paper is based was part of a dissertation project on minority employment. The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Charles Myers, Ed Schein, John Van Maanen, Lotte Bailyn, and George Farris. Leonard Davidson is Assistant Professor of Organization Behavior and Management at University of Florida. David Krackhardt is a Research Associate at M.I.T. This paper was presented at the 1975 American Sociological Association Meetings in San Francisco.

STRUCTURAL CHANGE AND THE DISADVANTAGED: AN EMPIRICAL TEST OF CULTURE OF POVERTY/SITUATIONAL THEORIES OF HARD-CORE WORK BEHAVIOR

Abstract

The culture of poverty explanation of the work behavior of the "hard-core unemployed" is tested against situational explanations by examining trainee reactions to two naturally occurring structural changes in a minority employment program. (1) Program structure improvements over a five-year period were found to be associated with radical improvements in male trainee performance; trainee population characteristics did not change during the period. (2) During one year of participant observation analysis, systematic changes in placement opportunity and staff supportiveness were also associated with significant changes in trainee behavior. It is concluded that the work values of the disadvantaged are potentially strong, but are protected in situations with limited opportunity, supporting a "lower class value stretch" conceptualization.

The existence of a "culture of poverty" among the poor has been an issue of fierce controversy in the sociological literature (see Winter, 1971). Much of the controversy has revolved around Lewis' (1966) contention that this subculture is self-perpetuating; that is, though the behavioral patterns of the subculture are originally formed in response to objective structural conditions, these patterns are perpetuated via socialization of the young. Thus, Lewis (1966: XLV) suggests that member behavior in the poverty subculture becomes somewhat independent of the external opportunity structure:

> The culture of poverty...is not only an adaptation to a set of objective conditions of the larger society. Once it comes into existence it tends to perpetuate itself from generation to generation because of its effects on the children. By the time slum children are age six or seven they have usually absorbed the basic values and attitudes of their subculture and are not psychologically geared to take full advantage of changing conditions or increased opportunities which may occur in their lifetime.

Though Lewis refers to a small segment of the poor, this "in-the-individual" viewpoint has often been extended to Americans classified as hard-core unemployed or disadvantaged.[1] Such a view suggests that poverty is in substantial part the product of a "disadvantaged American Negro personality" (Rutledge and Gass, 1967: 18); "focal concerns of lower class culture" (Miller, 1958); or the "unstable" family structure of lower class Negroes (Moynihan, 1967: 51). Similarly, other researchers have developed the "personal causation approach" to "work inhibition" (Tiffany, et al. 1970: 164); described the unhealthy personality development of the "disintegrated poor" (Beiser, 1965); and advanced psychoanalytic explanations

of the failure of the poor in job training programs (Lawrie, 1969). All of these viewpoints emphasize individual as opposed to opportunity structure determinants of poverty.

On the other side of the fence are "situationalist" researchers who view the basic personality and values of the poor as similar to that of the middle class (Valentine, 1968; Liebow, 1967; Wellman, 1968; Ryan, 1971; R.A.H. Rosen, 1970), or who claim that the poor subscribe to middle class values but develop alternative values to adjust to present situational pressures (Rodman, 1963; Rainwater, 1970). The key point in these positions is that inequities in the opportunity structure constrain the behavior of the poor, and that opening up the opportunity structure would allow the expression of underlying middle class motivational and behavioral patterns.

This controversy cannot be resolved by theory alone; to determine if personality patterns vary under changed environments, substantial environmental change must be observed. The previous studies, many of which examine minority employment programs, are subject to this failing because they look at the personality of the poor within a relatively unchanging environment. Though it might appear that an employment program would be an excellent setting to study the effects of improved work environments on individual personality, this is generally not the case. If such programs place trainees at all, it is often in secondary labor market jobs that contain little advancement opportunity. Trainees appear to be aware of this fact (cf., H.E.W., 1972: 172; Wellman, 1968; Wolfe, 1971: 167-8; Doeringer, 1968: 14).

A study by Zurcher (1970) did examine substantial environmental change, though not in an industrial employment context, and supported the personality effects hypothesized by the situationalists. Zurcher found that nine of ten traits indicative of competence and confidence increased after poor members

participated in an O.E.O. community poverty organization. These findings led Guttentag (1970: 14-5) to conclude:

> When the poor exercise active power and responsibility in organizations, their attitudes and aspirations grow to be similar to those of the middle class. The evidence which Zurcher presents should give pause to those who claim that lower class culture is little influenced by new social contexts...

These situationalist findings can be further tested in an industrial setting by studying any employment program for disadvantaged minorities which offers substantial improvement over secondary labor market jobs, or that changes radically in opportunity structure during the course of its operation. Such a program was encountered, and two natural experiments were observed that reflect on the in-the-individual/situational controversy.

THE T.O.P. PROGRAM AND RESEARCH METHODS[2]

In 1968, Deeco, a large manufacturing firm, set up a training facility in the predominantly black ghetto of an eastern city. At the T.O.P. facility, disadvantaged community residents were trained for entry-level Deeco jobs. After obtaining two to four months of orientation and job exposure, trainees were placed in Deeco if their attendance and performance were judged satisfactory. Between 1968 and 1972 about half of 515 T.O.P. entrants were placed.

In studying this program, entry was negotiated with the program staff to do a year and a half of overt participant observation in T.O.P. and Deeco, and to analyze personnel records of all program entrants. A main sample of intensive study was composed of 15 program staff, 51 program participants, and 52 Deeco supervisors. Longitudinal observation of two to eight months was completed on 29 of 36 recent program participants and

their supervisors. At least two interviews were completed with 26 of the recent and all 15 early participants and their supervisors. In addition to this main sample, many other T.O.P. and Deeco employees were interviewed and observed in less depth.

EXPERIMENT 1 -- THE MYTH OF THE HARDCORE

Interviews with the program staff consistently suggested that male trainees performed much poorer in the early years of T.O.P. (1968-69) than in recent years (1971-72). These remembrances were confirmed by analysis of personnel records and interviews with T.O.P. graduates. The personnel data in Table 1 indicate that early trainees performed substantially poorer on attendance, time to placement certification, and placement record.

INSERT TABLE 1

The interview data in Table 2 also provide evidence of poorer T.O.P. job behavior among early graduates.[3] Relative to recent grads, early grads described themselves as being less open, showing less motivation, and getting along less well with coworkers and supervisors.

INSERT TABLE 2

The staff's usual explanation of these findings was that the early T.O.P. population was more hard core. This is an in-the-individual explanation, for it indicates that poorer performance was due to poorer individual backgrounds. Illustratively, a staff member noted:

> In the early days of T.O.P. there were about 36 men here on two shifts. There was a lot of absence, about 15 or 20%, and a lot of turnover. About 50%

> were the hard core--they are the game-players who go from one program to another but prefer to do their thing on the street. It's changed more [in recent years] to the underemployed and undereducated, but not due to selection, since we don't screen.

Though the staff member pointed out that the staff hadn't tried to select higher quality trainees, he nevertheless believed that fewer hard core trainees entered T.O.P. in recent years. This individual explanation of trainee performance differences can be tested by comparing personnel records and interview responses of early and recent trainees. We would expect to find more disadvantaged backgrounds among early trainees, and, in the extreme, no differences in program structure if the culture of poverty explanation of employment success was valid. Conversely, a poorer program environment but similar individual backgrounds would provide confirmation of situationalist theory.

Analysis of trainee background is presented in Table 3. It can be seen that there was no difference in age or nationality between early and recent trainees. Their marital and family statuses were also similar except that early trainees tended to have one more child to support. Further, their job histories were not significantly different on seven dimensions. However, one trend was observed in job history: prior to T.O.P., recent trainees were out of work a median time of 22 weeks longer than early trainees. Recent trainees also had a background advantage in having completed about one more year of high school. Location of high school and present residence patterns were similar for both groups.

INSERT TABLE 3

Overall, these data are similar for the two groups and do not support the individualist position that early trainees were more disadvantaged. In

fact, the two factors which varied significantly, number of children and educational level, were not related to placement success for the T.O.P. male population as a whole. Number of children was similar for placed and non-placed trainees,[4] as was educational level.[5] Further, if it had any impact, the trend noticed in time out of work favored success of the early group. Their shorter median time unemployed was slightly related to placement success.[6] Thus, not only were early and recent trainees similar on most background characteristics, but where they did diverge, the characteristic was unimportant to success or favored success of the early group.

If background was not the key factor in the radically lower performance of early male trainees, what was responsible for the differences? Simply stated, the training program was very different, and this difference in situation was reflected in individual behavior (seen by the staff as hard core behavior).

Early trainees experienced a program that was poorer in many ways. For instance, as indicated in Table 4, it took much longer to get placed into Deeco in the early period. Though the mean difference was not quite statistically significant ($p = .08$), the median difference of 10 weeks was certainly a significant difference to the trainees. Besides reflecting the poorer performance of the earlier group, this longer placement time reflected less willingness among Deeco supervisors to hire early T.O.P. trainees due to the great strength of the "T.O.P. Stigma"--a widely documented pattern of negative expectations toward T.O.P. trainees. Equally discouraging and analytically purer, the median time to wait for a Deeco job after the trainee had been certified placeable was five weeks longer for the earlier group.

INSERT TABLE 4

Another key difference reflected in Table 4 was the wage policy at T.O.P. Not only were the earlier wages $.19/hour lower on the median, but these wages compared less favorably to final pay at past jobs. Early trainees took a median pay cut of $.25/hour in coming to T.O.P., while recent trainees earned an amount similar to their wages at former jobs.

Differences in the program were also reflected in interviews with graduates. As indicated in Table 5, early graduates described the program as much poorer. They faced fewer jobs, evaluated the T.O.P. pay more negatively, and received less training and basic education.

INSERT TABLE 5

Overall, the major difference between early and recent programs was that the program encountered by early trainees was in a start-up phase, and the opportunity for a career in Deeco was realistically suspect. This lack of "credibility", as one staff member called it, was reflected not only in the previously mentioned deficiencies in the techno-economic job environment (i.e., pay, training, job content, promotion), but also in social environment inadequacies. For example, early trainees received less sponsorship from referral sources and T.O.P. staff (see Davidson, 1975). While most recent graduates were referred by trusted friends, neighbors, or relatives who knew of T.O.P. and Deeco and could facilitate trainee careers, most early graduates were referred by agencies. Early trainees also received less coaching and were delegated less responsibility by their less experienced supervisors. This is reflected in trainee characterizations of early supervisors as less "people oriented" and less likely to

use "general supervision". These social environment differences are presented in Table 6.

INSERT TABLE 6

Comments of two of the very early trainees further reflect the poorer program that was encountered, and a lack of trainee motivation until opportunity was demonstrated. The first trainee dropped out of T.O.P. due to the program's lack of placement opportunity, but returned when jobs opened up in Deeco. He remembered:

> I came in every day but after a while I started dropping out and coming in every other day since nothing was happening in seven months. But then they started to get jobs [in Deeco] so I was disappointed I left. [Emphasis mine] I came back and saw what I had to do. They counseled me and recognized me and I took off and did everything.

A second graduate described how the motivation of the group of trainees didn't improve until opportunity was demonstrated:

> In the beginning everyone was just marking time. At first I'd just look to lunch time and not be interested. We had a couple of supervisors we believed who told us where we could end up and we started to show initiative. Then when the first guy got out to Deeco we buckled down. [Emphasis mine] What they told us was true that they'd let us out by our attendance. I was the eleventh out.

Thus it is clear that trainees would not demonstrate motivation or a career perspective at T.O.P. unless the situation contained real opportunity. Trainee effort was tied to a realistic assessment of the situational possibilities, and lower effort was due to a poorer program, not to more disadvantaged or hard core backgrounds.[7]

While this discussion reflects the influence of large changes in the program structure on collective trainee behavior, the analysis depended largely on personnel records and interviews. An analysis of this type

does not adequately demonstrate the day-to-day process of individual adjustment to varying job and social environmental conditions. However, such a process was observed during one year in which radical changes in the program structure occurred.

EXPERIMENT 2 -- HIRING FREEZE, FAMILY, AND STAFF TURNOVER AT T.O.P.

During a year of participant observation at T.O.P., three very different program structures were encountered. Each structure lasted about four months and varied on dimensions of techno-economic opportunity and social environment supportiveness. During period I, opportunity was low but staff experience and supportiveness were high; opportunity and supportiveness were both high during period II; and opportunity was moderate while supportiveness was low during period III. These varying situational configurations had extreme effects on trainee behavior.

Period I: Hiring Freeze -- During the first four months of my observation, the central issue on the minds of trainees and staff was a hiring freeze in Deeco. Because Deeco business had slacked off, there was little demand for the manufacturing components that the T.O.P. plant produced. As a result, trainees were given "make work" at T.O.P., taken by cab to low level, temporary Deeco jobs, or laid off. At a T.O.P. personnel meeting, a supervisor described how previously cooperative trainees became defensive as layoff rumors circulated. In a distressed voice she said:

> I assume Darlene Evans has been listening to Andrea Johnson [a trainee who complained strongly about layoffs]. Darlene says T.O.P. is totally no good--she's very bitter. I can't work with her under these circumstances. Monday in the cab the whole group was cold. Ruth had an attitude, too. I asked her about it and she refused to discuss it.

At this time a great deal of gameplaying, dissatisfaction, and boredom was observed, particularly among placeable trainees who had been at T.O.P. for six or seven months and had been promised Deeco placement after three months. Though the staff population was generally stable, experienced, and extremely concerned about trainee welfare throughout this period, there was little they could do to aid trainees in obtaining placement. Only a few trainees could be placed through exceptional or unofficial procedures, and layoffs could not be avoided, though the visibly upset staff was able to postpone them until after Christmas. Many trainees left T.O.P. and others were terminated during period I, as seen in Table 7.

INSERT TABLE 7

Period II: Family -- When Deeco jobs started to open up, the T.O.P. atmosphere changed radically. Three trainees who were in the most socially prominent clique and who had been at T.O.P. for about seven months were placed. They came back to T.O.P. often and spoke positively about their Deeco jobs. One of these graduates had a wife working at T.O.P. who passed on word about Deeco. Another trainee was hired who had relatives in Deeco, and he spoke to his coworkers about Deeco opportunity. Trainees were no longer given temporary or make-work assignments, but were employed on higher level T.O.P. jobs.

While these improvements in the opportunity structure were occurring, the staff population remained stable and supportive, and trainees became more responsive to the personal attention offered by the staff. A closer atmosphere developed as trainees often spoke of a "T.O.P. family." An illustration of this atmosphere was seen at a party for T.O.P. graduates, when a supervisor presented the graduation certificates, saying:

> "I sincerely wish you the best of luck. It's been a pleasure to work with you. If you use your present strategy, and with some luck, I'm sure you'll do very well in Deeco."
>
> Applause and friendly boos followed, and the crowd of staff members began to yell "speech." One of the graduates got up and said, "I just want to say working here is like working in a family--"
>
> "And getting paid for it!" someone yelled. The group laughed.
>
> "--Everyone is friendly here," she finished. Applause and more boos followed, as the group demanded a speech from the other graduate.
>
> She got up and said, "I've enjoyed working here--I'll miss everyone."
>
> "Will you miss me?" one of the staff joked.
>
> "How about me?" another teased. The group continued to boo, cheer, and applaud the graduates.

Within this warm period II atmosphere, trainee conversation and behavior reflected a career perspective toward Deeco rather than the game-playing seen during period I. To illustrate, Jim, a trainee who had left T.O.P. during the first period, heard about the end of the Deeco hiring freeze and tried to get back into T.O.P. At a personnel meeting his desire to return was explained by a staff member:

> Jim followed and looked up to Tony [one of the clique who were placed]. He must have heard from Tony about the money on C-shift [in Deeco] and he came back for that.

Thus trainee performance improvements snowballed as senior trainees and new recruits learned of Deeco opportunities through friendship networks and close relations with T.O.P. staff. These performance improvements were so extreme that during this second period <u>every trainee was placed or stayed on at T.O.P.</u> (see Table 7). In fact, two former drug addicts were placed in Deeco after being model trainees during their period II T.O.P.

stay. This was unusual since the staff claimed that trainees who were formerly "drug dependent" rarely succeeded at T.O.P.

Period III: Staff Turnover -- During period II, a new program director began to plan changes in the T.O.P. operation. He designed a new organizational structure which would formalize the program, giving it a greater profit and production emphasis. Though the changes were discussed during period II, they did not effect trainees until widespread replacement of supervisory personnel took place. The precipitating event which initiated the final period was the replacement of the most experienced and employee oriented supervisor by a new staff member who had little rapport with trainees. He was described by the other staff as "insensitive" and "a poor listener." As we drove to a Saturday morning basketball game, a trainee who was at T.O.P. at the end of the second period, and who later dropped out during this third period, told me:

> It seems like ever since Ed Thomas [the new staff member] came in there's been problems at T.O.P. We called another [gripe] meeting to talk about some of the things going on.

During period III, group leaders, formerly the staff members who spent the greatest time interacting with trainees, were asked to leave due to the new organization structure. Because of conflicts with the administration, many higher level supervisors also left voluntarily. Trainees were given little attention during this period as staff spent their time talking about the administration, fighting among themselves, and trying to find new jobs.

Other administrative directives added to these social environment problems, causing the climate to become more formal and bureaucratic in tone. Along with increased production pressure, desk and chair positions were changed in staff offices, creating barriers between office holders and

office visitors. Signs went up outside every office and every work area announcing the position of the office holder and task done in that area (e.g., "Office of the President"; "Electronics Assembly Area").

Though the availability of Deeco jobs stayed high during period III, job content at T.O.P. suffered. New products were planned but the supply of necessary materials and machines was sometimes delayed, leaving trainees with little to do.

As a result of these changes in the job and social environment, trainee defensiveness shot up to period I levels. Talk of a T.O.P. family ceased, while gameplaying and "playing one supervisor against another" increased. Trainees requested a number of gripe meetings which revealed intense suspicion and hostility toward T.O.P.

The following excerpt from my field notes reflects the differences between the period II and III program. During period III, Mike, a T.O.P. group leader, remarked to me over lunch:

> "Yeah, T.O.P. is changing. A lot of us are leaving. I have a file at home of things that went on here years ago. After I leave I'll show it to you."
>
> "Well, what about talking with the people?" I asked, "I wonder how much of that there'll be at T.O.P. now? When I was here during the spring [period II], you or Sammy or somebody was always joking with a trainee."
>
> "No more...no time for it--it's all production now. Look, you know why we joked then; we could afford to. We knew our people better then. You get someone with an attitude and you mess around with him. They need that attention and they come around. Or you see who your good ones are and you give the guy a little responsibility..,
>
> "Hell, I wouldn't be in there [print room] all day. They'd be running it by themselves. I had 16,000 and only a 2% reject rate [high production levels]. I'd only come in to mess around with them...
>
> "Now it's different...I can tell you this. You been here--you know it anyway...it's changed. The trainees

> get in here at 7:00 and there's no supervisor on the floor to start it up. It breaks down morale right away. You got supervisors fighting supervisors...
>
> 'Now I tell a guy to do something and he says, 'You're not my supervisor!' I had to give a guy a warning the other day. When did that ever happen in the spring?"

Mike points out the growing production pressure, increased supervisory turnover and dissention, lessening of staff attention for trainees, and resulting deficiencies in period III trainee performance.

As demonstrated in the Table 7 performance measures, it was difficult to recognize T.O.P. trainees as members of the same program during the three periods. Trainee behavior was radically different as the T.O.P. situation changed in character.

CONCLUSIONS

Trainee reactions to the extreme changes in the T.O.P. program structure indicate that the behavioral patterns of disadvantaged minority employees are closely tied to situational realities. These findings provide evidence that in regards to the world of work, the impact of the minority individual's personality has been overstated and misunderstood in the culture of poverty literature. Rather than viewing attitudinal and motivational states as permanent parts of the individual's personality, their adaptive nature should be emphasized.

By labeling people as hard-core unemployables we lose sight of this adaptive quality and imply that psychological traits are independent variables which cause employment success or failure (cf., Allen, 1970). Such a view is easily supported through static analysis and simple statistical relations. While many early, period I, and period III trainees demonstrated a lack of interpersonal trust, an external locus of control, and low achievement motivation, to imply from

such findings that personality caused employment failure would be misleading. Such a static approach ignores the quality of the work environment. Unlike the present longitudinal observational study, culture of poverty research generally does not follow disadvantaged employees through significant changes in their work world, or examine the behavior of the disadvantaged within an environment that contains substantial opportunity.

This is not to imply that individual background was totally unimportant. Indeed, interaction with T.O.P. trainees revealed that personal problems often had a significant effect on work behavior. However, the economic underpinnings of such problems should be recognized. Continued primary employment allowed employees to live under conditions in which many of these family, legal, medical, and psychological problems were alleviated (see Davidson, 1973). The key point is that individual characteristics and the working environment are intimately tied. Along these lines, Gurin (1968: 113) has shown in one of the few longitudinal studies in this area that personal efficacy of disadvantaged minority trainees was related to earnings, and that there was a stronger relation between earnings causing efficacy than the reverse. Gurin concluded:

> We cannot really separate the motivational and reality aspects of the problems that these trainees face, for their motivation is directly tied to the question of the reality payoffs available to them.

If we are to understand employee motivational patterns, we will thus have to take a closer look at the employee's work environment. The present analysis indicated that both the social and techno-economic environment had to be viewed as worthwhile or trainees would significantly limit their effort. The supportiveness of the period I staff and availability of Deeco jobs during period III were not enough, alone, to elicit high motivational levels. But during period II, when both factors were present, trainee

motivation and performance reached impressive levels.

These firdings should indicate to the sensitive researcher that, on the whole, the disadvantaged minority individual's orientation toward work is potentially strong, but his positive work values are often hidden unless real opportunity is available. At T.O.P., the "negative attitudes to work", so often described by individualist researchers and readily observable during periods I and III, were seen to be highly protective "faces" or "performances" (cf., Goffman, 1959). Such trainee behavioral modes as game-playing and defensiveness were seen to be realistic adaptive styles resulting from the belief that job opportunity and supervisory support were not "for real"--reasonable points of view in the secondary labor market (Piore, 1969; Liebow, 1967; Bluestone, 1970: 26-7). In fact, Gurin and Gurin (1970) and Grier and Cobbs (1969) have argued that these styles may be quite functional for the individual; demonstrating a career perspective when no career opportunity is available would only be intra-punitive.

It should be emphasized that for most trainees these defenses did not have a life of their own, but faded away or reappeared as the T.O.P. opportunity structure changed. Rather than a job being "no big thing", when the job situation had potential and supervisor and employee developed a good relationship, strong career perspectives were shown.

The strength of these career perspectives suggests a paradox in the way poor minority employees relate to their jobs. Below the surface face of many black males confined to secondary labor market jobs, there appears to be a boiling desire to advance. This desire is suppressed due to the limited opportunity structure encountered, but when allowed expression it is a powerful force, as shown by period II trainee performance, and, later,

by a 90% retention rate among graduates who advanced beyond Deeco entry level jobs (see Davidson, 1975).

Yet because of this same underlying career orientation, when opportunity was not available, early, period I and III trainees, and later graduates in Deeco would not demonstrate reliable job behavior. Turnover of male graduates who were locked into entry level Deeco jobs without propects of supervisory sponsorship was 67% (see Davidson, 1975).

Unlike Chinoy's (1955) auto worker who fantasized opening a business, and unlike the nonpromoted white Deeco employees (described by Campanis, 1966) who settled for stagnation on one Deeco job, by quitting, the T.O.P. trainee or graduate came to terms with his desire for advancement more honestly. Grier and Cobbs (1969: 91) described this element of dealing with the environment honestly as follows:

> We suggest that there is no more subtle student of American society than the black man, and when he suspects that he is called to a race where there is no prize, he simply declines to run.

While it is possible that older black males might adjust to blocked mobility in the ways Chinoy and Campanis describe, the younger T.O.P. employees would not. Their desire for the American Dream was still lit, and they were not yet ready to hide their eyes from the light.

The presence of this underlying career orientation in conjunction with protective faces for dealing with limited career opportunity supports the "lower class value stretch" positions of Rodman (1963) and Rainwater (1970). Such a theoretical perspective has important applied implications for the structuring of employment for the disadvantaged. Such opportunities should allow the expression of values that are held but hidden, rather than attempt to create new values. What is thus called for is a structural model of changing environments to alter individuals rather than a psychiatric

model of changing the individual and ignoring the environment. Informal modeling after a co-worker or supervisor while the individual is employed in a job with opportunity is a better way to reduce negative attitudes to work than developing formal attitude change techniques. Frequently such role playing, counseling, or orientation techniques are conducted before job opportunity has been demonstrated. Thus it is not surprising that the use of such techniques may be met with hostility (Wellman, 1968), may not relate positively to performance (H. Rosen, 1970), and may not change attitudes (Friedlander and Greenberg, 1971).

As Bluestone (1970) has shown, poverty program research and interventions have directed disproportionate effort on changing poor individuals, and have not come to terms with altering labor market opportunity structure. To blame the individual for "playing a game" while he is locked into a secondary labor market job is, as Ryan (1971) says, to blame the victim.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The definition of disadvantage used here is that of the U.S. Department of Labor. Disadvantaged individuals (a) receive an income below the poverty line, and (b) meet at least one of the following criteria: high school dropout, minority group member, handicapped, under 21 years of age, over 45 years of age, unemployed 15 weeks or longer.

[2]More detailed information on the T.O.P. program and methods can be found in Davidson, 1973.

[3]It is likely that the interview differences reported in Tables 2, 5, and 6 underestimate differences between early and recent male T.O.P. populations. Note that interviews compare responses of only those trainees who graduated. Because fewer trainees graduated in the early years, early graduates were a less representative population sub-group than were recent graduates. Since graduates' perceptions of the quality of their performance and the program tended to be more positive than the perceptions of nongraduates, early graduates probably overstated the feeling of their trainee population to a greater extent than did (the more representative) recent graduates.

[4]$\bar{X}$ = 2.53 for the placed vs. 2.36 for non-placed--N.S.; median = 2 vs. 2.

[5]$\bar{X}$ = 10.28 years vs. 10.14 years--N.S.; median = 10 vs. 10.

[6]$\bar{X}$ = .53 years for the placed vs. .56 years for non-placed--N.S.; median = 6 vs. 15 weeks.

[7]Though staff generally gave individual explanations of the early-recent performance differences, such a view was not unanimous. A minority of the staff openly recognized the structural problems in T.O.P.'s early years, and were willing to admit such inadequacies (though such admission reflected poorly on the staff themselves). Thus various staff members noted:

> At first we got people from OIC, but T.O.P. wanted them to stay there since there was nothing for them to do at T.O.P.
>
> Now trainees are more cooperative. It's not selection. The program had to prove itself so that the trainees didn't think it was a game and there wouldn't be jobs after T.O.P.

At first the program was exploitation since it sometimes took nine months to a year to be placed. Trainees were aware of the tokenism. They said, "I'm doing Deeco work but what am I getting: peanuts." They tried before but didn't do as well. Trainees want to come to work now but it wasn't that way before. I don't know exactly what to pinpoint but it could be faster placement and hearing from friends who live in the community --the word gets around it's a good program.

Allen, V.L. 1970. "Theoretical issues in poverty research." Journal of Social Issues 26 (Spring): 149-67.

Beiser, M. 1965. "Poverty, social disintegration and personality." Journal of Social Issues 21 (January): 56-78.

Bluestone, B. 1970. "The tripartite economy: labor markets and the working poor." Poverty and Human Resources 5 (July-August): 15-35.

Campanis, P. 1966. Blue Collar Careers in a Factory. Ph.D. Dissertation, Brandeis University.

Chinoy, E. 1955. The Automobile Worker and the American Dream. New York: Doubleday.

Davidson, L.M. 1973. The Process of Employing the Disadvantaged. Ph.D. Dissertation, M.I.T.

_____. 1975. "Sponsorship in a minority employment program." Human Organization. In press.

Doeringer, P.B. 1969. "Low-income labor markets and urban manpower programs: a critical assessment." Report submitted to Office of Manpower Research, U.S. Department of Labor, January 1969.

Friedlander, F. and S. Greenberg. 1971. "Effect of job attitudes, training, and organization climate on performance of the hard-core unemployed." Journal of Applied Psychology 55 (August): 287-95.

Goffman, E. 1959. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.

Grier, W.H., and P.M. Cobbs. 1969. Black Rage. New York: Bantam.

Gurin, G. 1968. Inner City Negro Youth in a Job Training Project: A Study of Factors Related to Attrition and Job Success. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research.

Guttentag, M. 1970. "The insolence of office..." Journal of Social Issues 26 (Summer): 11-7.

Health, Education, and Welfare. 1972. Work in America. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press.

Lawrie, J.W. 1969. "Making it--the hardest way." Psychology Today 3 (November): 29-31.

Lewis, O. 1966. La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty--San Juan and New York. New York: Random House.

Liebow, E. 1967. Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men. Boston: Little, Brown.

Miller, W.B. 1958. "Lower class culture as a generating milieu of gang delinquency." Journal of Social Issues 14 (Number 3): 5-19.

Moynihan, D.P. 1967. "The Negro family: the case for national action." In L. Rainwater and W.L. Yancy (eds.), The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press.

Piore, M.J. 1969. "On-the-job training in the dual labor market: public and private responsibilities in on-the-job training of disadvantaged workers." In A.R. Weber, et al. (eds.), Public-Private Manpower Policies. Madison: Industrial Relations Research Association.

Rainwater, L. 1970. "The problem of lower class culture." Journal of Social Issues 26 (Spring): 133-48.

Rodman, H. 1963. "The lower-class value stretch." Social Forces 42 (December): 205-15.

Rosen, H. 1970. On-The-Job Orientation of Unemployed Negro Skill Center Trainees and their Supervisors. Detroit: Wayne State University.

Rosen, R.A.H. 1970. "The world of work through the eyes of the hard core." Personnel Administration 33 (May-June): 8-21.

Rutledge, A.L., and G.Z. Gass. 1967. Nineteen Negro Men; Personality and Manpower Retraining. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ryan, W. 1971. Blaming the Victim. New York: Pantheon.

Tiffany, D.W., et al. 1970. The Unemployed: A Social-Psychological Portrait. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Valentine, C.A. 1968. Culture and Poverty: Critique and Counter-Proposals. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wellman, D. 1968. "The wrong way to find jobs for Negroes." Trans-action 5 (April): 9-18.

Winter, J.A. (ed.). 1971. The Poor: A Culture of Poverty or a Poverty of Culture? Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Wolfe, T. 1971. Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers. New York: Bantam.

Zurcher, L.A. Jr. 1970. "The poverty board: some consequences of 'maximum feasible participation'." Journal of Social Issues 26 (Summer): 85-107.

TABLE 1

Personnel Record Comparison of the Performance of Early and Recent Trainees

	Early				Recent			
	$\bar{X}$	Median	(N)	%	$\bar{X}$	Median	(N)	%
Attendance -- % of time absent.....	17.8	15.5	(84)		6.7*	2.8	(23)	
Time to placement certification (in years).....	.37	.21	(37)		.12*	.09	(20)	
Placement record -- placed.....			(46)	34			(22)	65
fired.....			(61)	45			(9)	26
resigned.....			(29)	21			(3)	9
total.....			(136)	100			(34) †	100

* T-test difference significant at $P \leq .01$

† X^2 significant at $P < .05$, df=2

TABLE 2

Interview Comparison of the T.O.P. Performance
Reported by Early and Recent Graduates

	Early		Recent	
	%	(Total N)	%	(Total N)
Openness -- described self as "outgoing" or somewhat outgoing (vs. "quiet")	50	(12)	82	(17)
Motivation -- described self as high or moderate in "interest" or "push"	57	(14)	88	(16)
Relations among trainee group as a whole -- described as "good" or "OK"	70	(10)	90	(19)
Individual's relations with other trainees -- described as "close" or "tight"	73	(15)	89	(18)
Relation with supervisor -- described as "good" or "understanding"	57	(14)	81	(16)

TABLE 3

Personnel Record Comparison of the Backgrounds of Early and Recent Trainees

	Early				Recent			
	$\bar{X}$	Median	(Total N)	%	$\bar{X}$	Median	(Total N)	%
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS								
Age	24.8	21	(77)		24.8	21	(28)	
American Negro Nationality			(136)	93			(34)	91
MARITAL & FAMILY STATUS								
Single marital status			(119)	60			(34)	68
Have children			(136)	41			(34)	41
Number of children	2.6	2	(56)		1.9*	1	(14)	
Age of youngest child	3.7	2	(54)		4.8	2.5	(14)	
JOB HISTORY								
Starting pay at last job prior to T.O.P.	$ 2.03	2.00	(88)		$2.27	2.01	(22)	
Final pay at last job	2.45	2.25	(63)		2.53	2.00	(13)	
Pay progress at last job	.25	.11	(62)		.32	.20	(13)	
Tenure (in years) at last job	1.37	.75	(56)		1.65	1.0	(19)	
Time out of work (in years) prior to T.O.P.	.46	.17	(56)		.79	.59	(19)	
Manual work at last job (vs. clerical, technical, and other)			(73)	67			(18)	50
Unskilled work at last job (vs. semiskilled or skilled)			(69)	55			(17)	47
EDUCATION								
Years of education	10.0	10	(114)		10.7*	11	(33)	
Southern high school attendance (vs. Northern or Eastern)			(87)	34			(23)	22
ADDRESS								
Inner city residence (vs. surrounding towns)			(123)	90			(34)	85

* T-test difference significant at $P < .05$

† No 2-by-2 X^2 were significant at $P \leq .1$ using Yates correction

TABLE 4

Personnel Record Comparison of the Programs Encountered by Early and Recent Trainees

	Early			Recent		
	$\bar{X}$	Median	(N)	$\bar{X}$	Median	(N)
Time to placement (in years).....	.48	.36	(66)	.30	.17	(21)
Time to placement after certification (in years).....	.28	.15	(34)	.17	.05	(16)
T.O.P. wage level.....	$2.02	2.00	(62)	2.23*	2.19	(25)
Pay differential from last job final pay to T.O.P. starting pay.....	-$.45	-.25	(31)	-.19	+.03	(8)

* T-test difference significant at $p \leq .01$

TABLE 5

Interview Comparison of the Programs Encountered by Early and Recent Graduates: Techno-economic Aspects

	Early		Recent	
	%	(Total N)	%	(Total N)
Job variety -- worked on 3 or more jobs at T.O.P.....	27	(15)	53	(19)
Pay evaluation -- described pay as "good" or good with a qualification (vs. poor).....	50	(18)*	67	(21)*
Satisfied with training received.....	0	(12)	35	(17)
Obtained some training (vs. none).....	54	(13)	67	(15)
Basic education -- was available during T.O.P. tenure....	73	(15)	92	(13)

*3 early and 3 recent grads gave two different responses.

TABLE 6

Interview Comparison of the Programs Encountered by Early and Recent Graduates: Social Environment Aspects

		Early		Recent	
		%	(Total N)	%	(Total N)
Referral sources:	friends, neighbors, relatives.....	29		58	
	both f.n.r. and agencies.....	14		11	
	agencies alone.....	50		26	
	off the street.....	7	(14)	5	(19)
Supervisor described as more concerned with people than production (vs. equal or less concerned).....		15	(13)	56	(16)
Supervisor described as using "general" supervision (vs. close or varied style).....		71	(7)	81	(16)

FEB 2 1976

TABLE 7

Performance of T.O.P. Trainees During Three Time Periods In Which the Program Structure Varied

		PERIOD I 10-1-71 to 1-31-72 (to 2-28-72 for females)		PERIOD II 2-1-72 to 5-31-72		PERIOD III 6-1-72 to 9-30-72	
SITUATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING T.O.P. PROGRAM	Techno-economic Job Opportunity	LOW: Deeco hiring freeze until 1-31 on jobs filled by T.O.P males and until 2-28 for females; temporary and "make work" training jobs at T.O.P.		HIGH: Jobs available in Deeco; normal training jobs at T.O.P.		MODERATE: Jobs available in Deeco; normal training jobs at T.O.P. but shortages of materials and machines; jobs become more bureaucratic.	
	Supervisory Supportiveness	HIGH: Experienced and concerned staff at T.O.P.		HIGH: Experienced and concerned staff at T.O.P.		LOW: Widespread staff turnover and dissention; social environment becomes more bureaucratic.	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
TRAINEE PERFORMANCE MEASURES	Termination	8	(23)	0	(0)	6	(26)
	Resignation	6	(17)	0	(0)	3	(13)
	Lay-off	7	(20)	0	(0)	0	(0)
	Placed	4	(11)	17	(68)	4	(17)
	Stayed to Next Period	10	(29)	8	(32)	10	(43)
	Total	35	(100)	25	(100)	23	(99)*

* Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding off.